Author's Note

The response to the hardcover publication of this book surprised both me and my publisher, Random House. We were initially worried that the book might be lost in the publicity surrounding the publication of other books espousing convoluted theories. But we had underestimated the extent to which, after thirty years of virtually unchallenged conspiracy conjecture, the conclusion that Oswald acted alone in assassinating JFK had evolved, ironically, into the most controversial position. While the media's response was overwhelmingly positive, the reaction from the conspiracy community was the opposite—not simply negative, but often vitriolic. There was little effort to study my overall evidence and conclusions with anything that approached an open mind. Indeed, there was a concerted counterattack to discredit both the book and its author.

There were panel discussions at conspiracy conventions in Boston and Dallas and special publications focused solely on contesting the book. A conspiracy-based "research center" in Washington, D.C., issued a "media alert" about *Case Closed.* The release consisted of five pages alleging the book was misleading and flawed, but the alert misstated my arguments and distorted the evidence in the case. Harold Weisberg, one of the deans of the conspiracy press, found his first publisher (he had previously self-published six conspiracy books) to bring out a book

titled *Case Open*, a broadside attack attempting to diminish the impact of my work.

Other conspiracy buffs launched personal attacks. It was, as one journalist commented, as if overnight I had become the Salmon Rushdie of the assassination world. I was accused of treason by a buff who ran a Dallas "research center," and my wife and I were subjected to several months of harassing telephone calls and letters. At an author's luncheon, pickets protested that I was a dupe of the CIA. Faxes and letters to the media also charged I was a CIA agent, or that the CIA had written my book, or that I was part of a conscious effort to deceive the public and hide the truth. (Some critics even expanded the accusations to my first book about Nazi doctor Josef Mengele, contending that I whitewashed the Mengele investigation, when actually that book was the first to detail Mengele's entire life on the run, including his time in U.S. captivity and the Israeli and German bungling of his capture.) Television and radio producers were harassed by callers attempting to have my appearances cancelled. Some reviewers who wrote favorably about the book received intimidating calls or letters. My publisher was subjected to the same treatment, and even my editor, Bob Loomis, was publicly accused of being a CIA agent.

Although I had expected that individuals who had invested their adult lives into investigating JFK conspiracies might react angrily to a book that exposed the fallacies in their arguments, the vehemence of these personal attacks surprised me. I had mistakenly expected a debate on the issues. It took little time to discover, however, the extent to which many people who believe in a JFK conspiracy do so with almost a religious fervor and are not dissuaded by the facts.

Case Closed was probably subjected to greater scrutiny by more "critics" than any other book published in recent years. Several emendations in this book are the result of what some charged as fraudulent omissions in my discussion of various aspects of the case. Because *Case Closed* attempted to deal with all the major issues in the assassination, plus countless arguments raised by conspiracy critics in the three decades following the Warren Commission, many of these, especially those addressed in footnotes, were condensed. To fit all of my research

into a single, manageable volume, I did not have the luxury of presenting and explaining each nuance of every issue, but instead focused only on primary arguments. For instance, in a few pages I addressed the theory that JFK's corpse was stolen from Air Force One and medically altered, although the author of that theory took over seven hundred pages to present it. Obviously, not every point raised in his book could be dealt with in *Case Closed.*

In the first edition, I acknowledged that "any of a dozen issues could have been the subject of a separate book, including, among others, Oswald's time in Russia, Jack Ruby's story, or the actual assassination." However, there was not one aspect of the assassination in which I did not study *all* of the available evidence before reaching any conclusion. Conspiracy critics, often complained that I had omitted some information that they contended contradicted one or another of my conclusions. In this edition, I have reinstated material included in earlier drafts but cut for the sake of brevity, to further explain the layers of intricacies in this case.

The remainder of the updated text in this edition has nothing to do with contentions raised by conspiracy buffs, but rather is the result of new scientific evidence or documents uncovered since the hardcover publication. Some of the information is critical, including the first confirmation that two of Oswald's fingerprints have now been identified on the trigger guard of his rifle, the one ballistically proven to have fired the bullets that killed JFK. Also, new disclosures about Oswald's visit to Mexico City provide important insights into the extent of his instability only two months before JFK's visit to Dallas. These, and other significant discoveries, such as a 1962 CIA debriefing of Oswald, have been added to the book.

The updated and restored information in this edition has only strengthened the book's original conclusion that Oswald and Ruby acted alone. Government files will continue to be released for the next few years. Not only am I familiar with the content of many already released, but I have spoken to individuals who are familiar with the still-classified documents. None of the government documents to be released alters the judgment reached in *Case Closed.*